

Buffalo: EOD's Best Friend

New Vehicle Helps Soldiers Sweep for IEDs

By Cpl. Bill Putnam
122nd MPAD

CAMP FERRIN-HUGGINS- Several times a day the combat engineers of Task Force

Iron Claw hit the roads here on dangerous missions in a very unusual vehicle, sweeping main supply routes (MSRs) for improvised explosive devices

(IEDs).

The job of IED sweeping falls on the shoulders of Soldiers like Spc. Daniel Young, Spc. Benjamin Paepke

and Sgt. Thomas Queen, all combat engineers in the 458th Engineer Battalion, who drive and operate the Mine Clearing Purpose Vehicle or "Buffalo."

On one MSR run, the trio ran a short IED sweep through Al Rashid. Each member on board the vehicle has a different job: Young drives, Paepke operates the arm and Queen is the vehicle commander.

They've been hit by small-arms fire and IEDs have blown up under them. But they still do it.

Only 16 of the battalion's Soldiers were selected to learn about the odd shaped, dark green, 22-ton Buffalo. The engineers were operating the vehicle after three weeks of training.

Their mission is simple, Young said. They drive all over Baghdad in the large, ungainly vehicle to look for IEDs hidden in some unusual and obvious



By Cpl. Bill Putnam, 122nd MPAD

Spc. Daniel Young (front) and Sgt. Thomas Queen (rear), engineers in the 458th Combat Engineer Battalion, watch for Improvised Explosive Devices during a sweep along a Main Supply Route through the Al Rashid district of Baghdad.

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115th FSB: 1BCT Soldiers' Life Line

By Sgt. Dan Purcell
122nd MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE IRONHORSE- The Soldiers of Delta Company, 115th Forward Support Battalion (FSB), attached to the 20th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division are more than just cooks and mechanics: They are part of a team that plays a vital role in keeping the 1st Brigade Combat Team

Ironhorse supplied.

"We are an Engineer Support Element (ESE). We support [Ironhorse] by providing maintenance, water, food and fuel. We even make mail runs." Sgt. Orlando Billups, a logistical specialist with the 115th said. "We do everything, but our main mission is maintenance."

In addition to maintenance, D Co. is also a vehicle

recovery asset.

"Whenever a vehicle breaks down outside the gate, we send out a mechanic who will try to fix it on the spot or determine if it needs to be towed in," Sgt. 1st Class Dezia Tarver, the 115th's maintenance noncommissioned officer in charge, explained.

Aside from their duties on Ironhorse, the company makes a regular supply run to Camp

Cuervo. A variety of supplies for both the engineer's and the 1st BCT are transported every other day.

"We send different people out on convoys every time we go," Billups said. "It gives them a chance to get outside the FOB (Forward Operating Base) to see what's out there, and it helps to ensure that they stay on a 'war footing.'"

TF Iron Claw Team Sweeps MSR

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ways.

"Typically we find a lot of sandbags, big bulky garbage bags," Young said.

About a week before they arrived at this camp, a different Iron Claw team crew found an IED in a garbage bag wrapped around a light pole.

"But there's so much garbage out here, you [have to] know what fits and doesn't fit," he said.

Every so often the crews find a bomb that explodes

before an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team arrives. That's happened to Young once. He said he was driving a Humvee when an IED blew up just after he drove past it.

Normally though, EOD will defuse the bomb before it explodes, Young explained.

Earlier this month, an IED exploded under the Buffalo and took out two tires.

"That's really all the contact so far," Young said. "But that's a lot for a month-and-a-

half."

The vehicle draws a lot of curious stares from people who see it. It's about 10 feet tall and V-shaped. There's also a long, extendable arm on the right side.

People also ask if it's a boat. Queen said people even act scared of it. However, the kids love it and wave at it.

1st Cavalry Division Brigade Combat Teams love it, too. The task force is probably a victim of its own popularity.

Each of the brigades in the division asks for Iron Claw a lot, so the many MSR that snake their way through the city will be clear of IEDs.

The task force's mission is two-fold, said Capt. Pat Marsh, the assistant engineer officer of the 5th Brigade Combat Team. Not only does it detect and probe for IEDs, it also deters insurgents from placing them.

The task force of combat engineers is assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division's engineer brigade at Camp Victory and isn't a permanent fixture here, Marsh said.

"They're more of a (General Support) type unit," he explained. "Where the need is, that's where they go."

The mission is working, Marsh said. Several IEDs have been found since Iron Claw arrived. Just the presence is keeping insurgents from placing their devices, Marsh added.

The Iron Claw Soldiers performing the mission say it's dangerous, but necessary.

"It's a tedious mission," Queen said during a late-afternoon sweep. "But some of the things we find, make a lot of us that are on the mission feel a lot better.

"But you can't catch everything," he added.



By Cpl. Bill Putnam, 122nd MPAD

The Mine Clearing Purpose Vehicle "Buffalo," originally designed to clear minefields, was adapted to detect and probe for Improvised Explosive Devices.



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Celebrate Killeen Festival Honors Soldiers, Freedom

► From *Killeen Daily Herald*

This weekend's Celebrate Killeen Festival will once again have soldiers at the focus of the annual celebration.

This will be the second year in a row that a large contingent of Fort Hood troops are in Iraq during the festival. In recognition of that, the theme for this year's event is "Our Soldiers, Our Freedom."

"We are celebrating Killeen with them in our thoughts," said Killeen Parks and Recreation Director Glenn Morrison.

The festival will run from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at the Killeen Community Center. It will include music, food, games for children and art.

Because the deployed soldiers' families are still here, the families can use the diversion, Morrison said.

"We feel like a big support mechanism," he said.

The big change for this year's festival was its move to the last Saturday in April,

rather than in March. Morrison said the reason for the permanent move of the festival is that weather is a bit unpredictable for mid-March.

Just in case of rain though, all of the events can be moved indoors.

Before the start of the festivities, there will be a 5 kilometer run at 8 a.m. The starting point for the run is at the community center. Entry fee is \$12 for the run, which is a part of the CenTex race series.

This is the fourth year the festival has been called Celebrate Killeen. In years past, the city celebrated the area's rich heritage with the Festival of Flags, which was held in conjunction with Killeen's annual PRCA rodeo

during Memorial Day weekend.

The planning and logistics involved in holding both the

festival and rodeo eventually prompted city officials to replace the Festival of Flags with two separate events.

Cultural diversity is a big highlight for the festival. In recognition of that, there will be a variety of international foods available to sample.

There will be two free concerts in the evening where such classics as "Under the Board Walk," "Yackety Yack" and "Charlie Brown" can be heard.

The Drifters will perform at 6 p.m. and the Coasters at 8 p.m. "It is an Oldies concert,"

Morrison said. "They play some of the great tunes of the '50s and '60s."

Fort Hood resident 11-year-old Spensha Baker, who recently finished second in the Junior Singer category on "Star Search," will also perform. She is scheduled to sing at 3 p.m.

There will also be a Children's Fun Zone. There will be a petting zoo, a fishing pond with 200 catfish, tall slides and pony rides.

The magic show has three times at 12 p.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

For the bigger children, there'll be a softball, horseshoe and washer tournaments.

New to the show this year will be an arts and crafts show by the Killeen Civic Art Guild inside of the community center. Awards for the exhibit will be at 2 p.m.

"I think we make improvements each and every year," Morrison said.

"We are celebrating Killeen with them in our thoughts."

**-Glenn Morrison
Director
Killeen Parks
and
Recreation**

**Reminder: Mother's Day is
Sunday, May 9**

**There's still time to mail a
card or send flowers.**



Saturday

High: 84
Low: 63



Sunday

High: 86
Low: 61



Monday

High: 91
Low: 62



Host Nation Info

Useful Phrases

Assalamu Alaikum	Hello
Wa'alaikum Assalam	(response)
Marhaba	Hello
Ma'a Assalama	Good bye

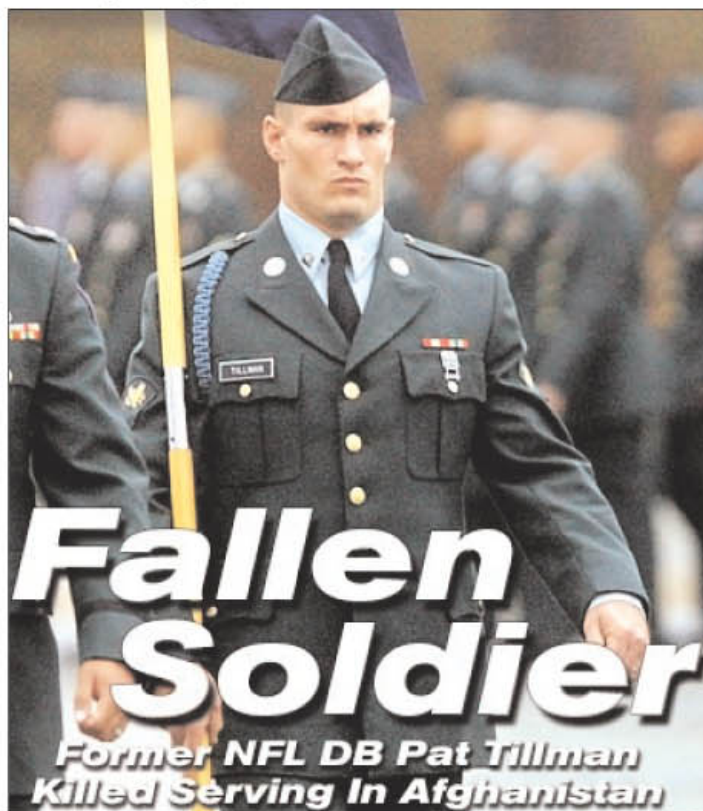
Today in History

April 24

► From historychannel.com

1800 Library of Congress established
 1916 Easter Rebellion begins
 1922 Forensic evidence is introduced in Australia
 1936 First unscheduled television event
 1940 Mystery novelist Sue Grafton is born
 1942 Ingrid Bergman signs on for *Casablanca*
 1947 Author Willa Cather dies
 1953 Winston Churchill knighted by Queen Elizabeth II
 1962 First coast-to-coast satellite telecast
 1967 Gen. William Westmoreland makes controversial remarks
 1974 Entertainer Bud Abbott (*Abbott & Costello*) dies

► Army Ranger, Former Arizona Cardinal Killed



Pat Tillman, 27, was killed Thursday in Afghanistan when his patrol was hit by a coordinated ambush of small-arms fire and mortars. Prior to military service, he played four seasons for the Arizona Cardinals. As a walk-on at Arizona State University, he was the Pac-10 defensive player of the year in 1997.

Today in Cav History



1945 - The 2nd Brigade started its movement north to Sinloan in preparation for relief of the 43rd Infantry Division.

1969 - The 1st Brigade seized the A Luoi airstrip clearing the way for supplies to be brought into the A Shau Valley located on the Laotian border in Vietnam. The airstrip was renamed LZ Stallion.

Scores

NBA

Playoffs

Indiana 108
 Boston 85
 (Pacers lead series 3-0)

TV GUIDE

	AFN ATLANTIC	AFN PACIFIC	AFN Sports	AFN Spectrum
18:00	Law & Order	Saturday Night Live 17:30	Baseball Tonight	Star Trek III: The Search for Spock 17:00
19:00	Headline News/ Navy/Marine Corps News	Kickin' It	Sportscenter	The View
20:00	NBA Playoffs - 1st Round Gm 3 Los Angeles Lakers @ Houston Rockets	Sportscenter	Sports Special- NFL Draft	What Not to Wear
21:00		NBA Playoffs - 1st Round Gm 3: Miami Heat @ New Orleans Hornets		Trading Spaces
22:00	ESPNNews			Trading Spaces

Dallas Mavericks
 Forward Antawn Jamison wins the 2004 NBA Sixth Man Award



MLB

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Chicago 3
 New York 1



EAST SEMIFINALS

Tampa Bay 4
 Montreal 0
 (Tampa Bay leads series 1-0)